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ABSTRACT

The articles reviewed in this paper are a supplement to a previous publication on college and university calendars. This new data tends to strongly reinforce the crucial point made in the previous study that indicated that college and university administrators have advocated one system, then another, without adequate empirical follow-up of the effects of various systems. The result, in some cases, has been the failure of calendars to meet the demands of their proponents. The latest data indicates that semester calendars are giving way to modified semester calendars and the 4-1-4 calendars. The articles abstracted come under the various categories of calendars in general, modular calendars, the 4-1-4 calendar, and the trimester calendar. (Author/HS)

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College and University Calendars - A Second Review

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SUMMARY

The articles reviewed in this abstract are a supplement to Abstracts and Reviews of Research in Higher Education, Number 15, dated November 1971.

This new data tends to strongly reinforce a crucial point noted in the earlier abstract on College and University Calendars. That point was:

> College and university administrators have advocated one system, then another, without adequate empirical follow-up of the effects of various systems. The result, in some cases, has been the failure of calendars to meet the demands of their proponents. If the reader seeks data to substantiate the claims of many of the authors reviewed, he will find very little and virtually none of impressive quality.

For example, in the McClew et al. discussion of Modular Calendars, we find Watson reporting on the four-instructional-days-per week schedule at Emory University. It is noted that no formal evaluation has been made of this procedure. Also, no real evaluation has been made of the Modular Calendar at Colorado (Rosselot et al.). There is, however, one exception to this trend of insufficient evaluation. The Rossman study of 4-1-4 at Macalaster College was done with the aid of five questionnaires to the students and four questionnaires to the faculty.

The current articles as well as the ones reviewed earlier, lead one to believe that changing from a semester calendar would mean increased income; but that this would be greatly offset by increased running costs (this would be further aggravated by unequal enrollment during the year).

Calendars such as the quarter and the trimester, offer the possibility of handling more freshmen, more graduates, and generally greater enrollment. They also offer the advantages of year-round operation, better utilization of faculty time, longer summer employment for students, an accelerated degree (three years), elimination of the "lame duck" session, and they are easy to convert to. Their disadvantages are that enrollment must be balanced year-round and this is impossible unless attendance is required, they require additional

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faculty and staff, tuitions are greater, and the entire institution is rushed for time. With enrollments at private institutions on the decline, it is doubtful that either of these are viable alternatives. However, the hard-pressed city and state colleges, as well as many community colleges, may find these space increasing options useful.

The latest data indicates that semester calendars are giving way to modified semester calendars (where the Fall term begins in early September and ends at Christmas) and the 4-1-4 calendars. The 4-1-4 calendar allows students to reduce their course loads during the long semesters, it provides them with a change of pace, and it serves to catalyze new and innovative programs. The problems associated with it are the difficulties in adapting curricular materials for the short semester, the additional expense involved in planning and execution, higher tuitions, the loss of continuity, problems associated with faculty load, additional administrative work, and the fact that attendance and initiative in the short term is poor. The modified semester calendar, on the other hand, requires little reworking, it maintains the summer option, it allows for the slowdown of plant and faculty as needed, and it still eliminates the "lame duck" session. The only real problem is that the Fall semester may be cramped for time if the school does not open early in September.

The only other alternative is the modular calendar which allows greater concentration in a course area and results in better academic achievement than do other calendars. It is, however, more suitable for smaller schools because of the complexity involved in administration, and the need for extra physical plant space.

Calendars in General

Nelson Associates. Increasing College Capacity by Calendar Revision, State University of New York, 1961.

The Nelson Associates feel that higher enrollment needs can be met by modifying the academic year or by modifying the academic day and week (e.g. extending the week to include Saturday). The claim is made that educationally no one system is better than another. They present the following criteria for evaluating the efficiency of any particular calendar: 1) Which system has the most student academic years (one year's academic work undertaken by one student), 2) Which permits a larger yearly enrollment, 3) Which permits the entrance of more freshman and more graduates per year, 4) All other things being equal, which gives the same results at the lowest cost, 5) Which has the fewest interruptions during the academic year, and 6) Which allows the teaching staff the option of teaching year-round and the student the option of being accelerated.

The authors claim that the superiority of one calendar over another depends on achieving equal enrollment in all terms (especially summers). They go on to say, however, that achieving this is unlikely.

Changing from a semester system would mean increased income from room fees and tuition but the cost of increased salaries, additional faculty, supplies, administrative costs, plant operation, etc. would offset this. Unequal enrollments would tend to increase this deficit so that the total operating budget is "bound to increase substantially" when modifying a calendar to year-round operation.

In writing about the lengthened day or week, the authors project a theoretical week of 42 hours (eight hours a day for five days with an additional four hours on Saturday less two hours for general school functions) or 47 hours (nine hours a day). Increasing the length of the academic day is economically feasible if the space is available. It should be noted, however, that it may be erroneous to assume that the increased time will be taken advantage of fully.

After considering the possibilities the authors conclude that a balanced trimester is slightly superior to a balanced quarter and that either is more efficient than the traditional semester system. They project the following percentages:

Trimester	Quarter	
50%	45%	More freshmen than the semester calendar.
50%	45%	More graduates than under the semester calendar.
71%	61%	More yearly enrollment than the semester calendar.
50%	45%	More student academic years than the semester calendar.

Oleson, Loyd C., Bruner, Bill J., Rosselot, Max, and Allen, Walker M. Whither the calendar. College and University, 1971, 46 (4), 740-754.

Oleson reported on the findings of the AACRAO Calendars Committee (1970-1971) in their investigation of all institutions of higher education in the U. S. years. (The 1971-1972 data was projected.)

Type of Calendar	Before 1970-71	1970-1971	1971-1972
Semester	1753	650	602
Early Semester (First sem. ends before Christmas).	83	657	823
4-1-4	8	100	230
Quarter	411	521	524
Trimester	81	72	76
Other	42	90	110

Bruner surveyed all of the states as to how many of them maintained common calendars for all state institutions. A total of 46 states responded, of these, five had a common quarter and two were planning to institute them while six had a common semester calendar and one was planning to institute it.

Rosselot listed some of the 20 factors the Coordinating Board of Texas Colleges and Universities considered to be essential before making a calendar change. These are: 1) The method of instruction, particularly if emphasis is on independent study, 2) What is the impact of starting and stopping on momentum, 3) What are the possibilities of students being employed and how are holidays to be arranged, 4) Fiscal problems, 5) Consortium members' calendars, and 6) The Utilization of facilities that are available.

A question was raised about the value of semester credit hours earned in a 14 week semester but neither the Middle States nor the North Central Association have any formula for converting contact hours to credit hours.

Modular Calendars (Time and Calendars Modules).

McClew, Robert W., Bishop, Helen B., Violetta, Shearer, W., Watson, Charles M., and Gallagher, Harry S. College and University, 1968, 43 (4), 549-555.

Watson reported that at Emory University there are only four instructional days per week (there are no classes on Wednesday). While no formal evaluations were made of this procedure, the number of students on probation decreased by one percent, while the number of students on the Dean's list increased by three percent.

Shearer wrote about the calendar at Centre College. Here, too, there are no classes on Wednesday. They operate on two, twelve week terms (four courses per term) with an additional winter and summer term of six weeks each (two courses per term). It is claimed that this calendar forces the selection of only the most essential curricula. As far as the division of time during the day is concerned, classes are held in 90 minute modules but one module each day is broken into two, 45 minute periods. Thus, most classes meet twice a week and labs as well as informal class meetings are held on Wednesday and Saturday.

At Smith College, courses are offered in blocks of three consecutive days (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday or Wednesday, Thursday, Friday). The students here, too, take four courses per term. What is more interesting is that classes are held in flexible time modules so that a particular class may meet three times per week for 50 minutes, two times per week, for 70 minutes, in combinations of two hours some days and one hour on others, in two, 60 minute seminars per week, etc.

Rosselot, Max B., Kuhns, Eileen P., Johnson, James A., and Wilson, Charles L. New variations on an old theme: the academic calendar. College and University, 1971, 46 (4), 311-324.

At Mt. Vernon Junior College, students operate on a modular calendar where they take one or two courses at a time. The rationale behind this is that when a person is taking five courses a semester, he is in class about 15 hours per week. The same time requirements pertain to someone taking one course for a period of three weeks. An institution could divide the 30 to 32 week academic year into five, six week terms or three terms of twelve, six, and twelve weeks, etc. Having courses given over brief modules means that there can be almost continuous registration. Mt. Vernon operates on the 12-6-12 week module and students may elect one course at a time to finish in six weeks, two courses at a time to finish in six weeks, or four courses at a time to finish at twelve weeks.

For students taking three-week courses there can be no conflicts in time so the class hours are flexible. All the class time could be used up in a week leaving the other two weeks for trips, papers, research, etc. Kuhns reported that the grades of those students with the highest concentration of three-week courses were "above the mainstream" students. The primary problem with the system is the administrative difficulty of having courses of different lengths running simultaneously.

Johnson reported that at Colorado College, classes are divided into nine blocks of three and a half weeks each. Each block is followed by a four and a half day break. Under this system, courses vary in length from one to three blocks but students and faculty members take only one course at a time. In addition to this, one room is assigned per course and class times are freely arranged. A student receives one credit per module (for transfer purposes this is the equivalent of three and a half semester hours or five and a quarter, quarter hours).

The purpose of the calendar was primarily to increase student concentration in each course area and secondarily to reduce class size. The secondary goal was not accomplished since popular courses still have large registrations and unpopular ones are even smaller. Space was not a problem, but lounges and other such facilities had to be used as classrooms. The primary difficulty occurred at the Registrar's office where the staff was constantly involved with dropping, registering, transferring, and grading students. No real evaluation of the program has been made, but it seems that students are reluctant to enroll in two block courses.

The 4-1-4 Calendar

Clayton. Laura B. A Survey of Ninety-Five Colleges Concerning Academic Calendars and the 4-1-4 System, Summer Employment of Faculty, and Sabbatical Leave. Hickory, North Carolina: Lenoir Rhyne College, 1969

The following table summarizes the data available on class hours under various calendar systems.

TABLE I

Type of Calendar	Arrangement of Class Hours	Number of Schools Using Arrangement	Percent
Semester	70 min., 2 days per week	1	4.7
	60 min., 3 days per week or 90 min., 2 days per week	2	9.5
	50 min., ? days per week	2	9.5
	50 min., 3 days per week or 80 min., 2 days per week	14	66.6
	55 min., 3 days per week	2	9.5
4-1-4	90 min., ? days per week	1	9.0
	50 min., 4 days per week	1	9.0
	50 min., 3 days per week or 75 min., 2 days per week	4	36.3
	50 min., ? days per week	3	27.2
	60 min., 3 days per week	1	9.0
	50, 70, or 100 min.	1	9.0
Quarter	60 min., 4 days per week	1	20.0
	70 min., ? days per week	1	20.0
	50 min., 3 days per week or 75 min., 2 days per week	1	20.0
	50 min., ? days per week	2	40.0

Table I Continued

Type of Calendar	Arrangement of Class Hours	Number of Schools Using Arrangement	Percent
Trimester	50 min., 3 days per week	1	33.3
	60 min., ? days per week	1	33.3
	50 min., ? days per week	1	33.3

Clearly, the trend is towards class periods of 50 min., three days per week or 75-80 min., two days per week.

Bouwman, Clark. De-schooling the semester. Liberal Education 1971. 57 (4), 487-499.

Bouwman makes the following summary statement concerning the 4-1-4 calendar.

> Typically, the brief winter term emphasizes independent study, interdisciplinary projects, intensified work in specialized areas of study, all-college study topics, community involvement, or experimental courses. Experiences gained and ideas germinated in such undertakings tend, in time, to influence offerings and procedures in regular semesters. Adoption of the 4-1-4 is generally associated with a de-emphasis on counting credits, greater flexibility of student and faculty roles in the curriculum, higher individual initiative and incentive, more ready acceptance of innovative and experimental work, and study in greater depth of a more limited number of courses (p.488).

At the time, 350 schools had a 4-1-4 calendar and another 150 to 200 were actively considering its adoption.

Karman, Thomas A. The Defiance College Winter Term. Improving College and University Teaching, 1971, 19 (4), 309-311.

This article concerns itself with fitting the winter term to meet student needs. The three options offered at Defiance College are: 1) Faculty designed studies, 2) Independent study with a faculty adviser, and 3) Groups of students generating their own studies. In a recent experiment, freshman and sophmores (in groups of 15 to 18 generated their own studies. Students began designing studies in the Fall semester, with the aid of faculty members, and ran them in the

January term. The emphasis was on approach, not content, so that grading took the form of honors, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory.

Rossman, Jack E. The interim term after seven years. Journal of Higher Education, 1971, 42 (7), 603-609.

Rossman calls the 4-1-4 calendar the "most viable" and "most widely adopted." Since 1964, he has distributed five questionnaires to the students and four questionnaires to the faculty of Macalaster College on the subject of the calendar. His most recent questionnaire (1970) yielded 130 (75 percent return) faculty responses and 400 (75 percent return) student responses. A total of 57 percent of the student respondents preferred on-campus faculty directed courses during the January term. Another 15 percent preferred on-campus independent study, 12 percent preferred off-campus independent study, 10 percent preferred off-campus faculty directed courses, and 5 percent preferred combinations of on-campus-off-campus work. The most significant trend is the increasing use of off-campus study which in 1970 had twice as many students as in 1967 interim term.

Faculty opinion had it that 43 percent of the students were enthusiastic about their work in the January term. A semantic differential found the interim term to be positively regarded by students, but freshman were somewhat less satisfied than upper classmen. It was noted that upper classmen used the independent study option more than did the freshman.

Tillyer, David A. What is a 4-1-4? Improving College and University Teaching, 1971, 19 (4), 301-303.

Tillyer concerned himself with the 4-1-4 calendar at Defiance College in its "adjustment period." The calendar was first adopted in order to eliminate the "lame duck" session after Christmas. Tillyer observed that courses were more hectic for students and teachers and so some graduation requirements as well as the requirement of carrying a minor were dropped. In addition to this, campus activities declined.

The Trimester Calendar

Desmond, Richard L. The enigmatic trimester calendar. Educational Record, 1971, 52 (4), 371- 376.

Desmond claims that the "Trimester calendar has the greatest potential for maximum utilization of time, campus facilities, and faculties." He writes that the trimester calendar is designed to serve more students at an increased pace. It offers the advantages of full-year operation and an accelerated degree. The problem is that in order for the calendar to be economically sound there needs to be year-round balanced enrollment.